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Evaluation of United Nations support for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and Africa

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

"Misalignment between expectations, capacities and accountability arrangements hinders programmatic focus and attainment of results"

Summary

The Office of Internal Oversight Services, at the request of the General Assembly, has assessed the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) finds that:

- The results frameworks mandated for and embedded in the budgets of both the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD involve the expectation of contributions to change far beyond the realm of the respective programme managers' influence. Resource and capacity constraints make it unrealistic to exert any detectable influence on, for example, the coordination of United Nations affairs in Africa. There are high expectations

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with regard to these programmes even without an unambiguous agreement among the multiple stakeholders on what can be reasonably expected given the limited capacities available. A lack of programmatic focus and insufficient communication with stakeholders worsen the situation.

- The main achievement of the two programmes is their contribution to heightened policy attention to the special development needs of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and Africa at United Nations-convened global forums. There is an unclear division of labour between the programmes and other actors within the United Nations. As perceived by Member States and United Nations partners, and within the entities themselves, there are multiple interpretations of what their operational priorities should be.

- Considerable overlaps exist between the countries covered by the Office of the High Representative by United Nations support for NEPAD. Of the 53 African countries covered by the latter, 37 are also covered under one or more of the subprogrammes of the Office of the High Representative. Conversely, more than one third of the 90 countries covered by the Office of the High Representative are in Africa. The potential for synergy between the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, as small offices with overlapping mandates, has not been exploited.

- Misalignment between United Nations support for NEPAD budget and organizational structure has led to little coordination within the three subprogrammes. No single senior officer is responsible for the overall results of United Nations support for NEPAD. At the same time, the parallel arrangements of the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs amid a fragmented structure in support of small island developing States need better coordination. These governance constraints have limited the effectiveness of United Nations support for NEPAD and the Office of the High Representative.

The five recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services include the recommendation that a review should be undertaken to translate the respective mandates into a narrower and more clearly defined programmatic focus and that revised (joint or individual) strategic frameworks be submitted for consideration by the General Assembly. Also, OIOS recommends that reviews be undertaken to combine administrative and advocacy functions of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Office of the High Representative and that the three subprogrammes under United Nations support for NEPAD in any case be brought under the responsibility and oversight of one senior officer. Likewise, the programme of United Nations system support for NEPAD should formulate a proposal for the purpose of strengthening the support for the regional consultative mechanism for Africa. Lastly, the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should clarify their respective roles and develop a joint action plan to bring coherence and provide guidance to United Nations system efforts in support of small island developing States.

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I. Introduction

1. At its sixty-first session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 61/235, in which it endorsed the decision of the Committee for Programme Coordination requesting the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to conduct an in-depth evaluation of United Nations support for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and Africa, for the consideration of the Committee at its forty-ninth session, in 2009.

2. The present final report incorporates comments received from the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and parts of the United Nations system supporting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which are reflected in italics.

II. Background

A. Evaluation objective, scope and methodology

3. The OIOS evaluation focused on sections 10 and 11 of the budget of the United Nations and programmes 8 and 9 of the biennial programme plan for 2008-2009, corresponding to the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and United Nations support for NEPAD.[1]

4. The evaluation examines the strategic frameworks of the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD, comprising the following subprogrammes and their operational objectives:[2]

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[1] NEPAD is the vision and strategic framework adopted by African leaders at the 37th Summit of the Organization of African Unity (which preceded the African Union of today), held in Lusaka in July 2001 to address poverty and underdevelopment throughout the African continent. NEPAD reflects the priorities on meeting the special needs of Africa as set out in the Millennium Declaration, namely, (a) supporting the political and institutional structures of emerging democracies in Africa; (b) further building peacekeeping capacity, in cooperation with regional organizations; (c) taking special measures to address the challenges of poverty reduction and sustainable development by cancelling debt; (d) increasing official development assistance; (e) enhancing private capital flows and building capacity for trade; and (f) helping Africa to build its capacity to tackle the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. The NEPAD secretariat, based in South Africa, coordinates the implementation of projects and programmes.

[2] A/62/6 (Sect. 10) and (Sect. 11). *The Office of the High Representative commented that changes have been proposed to its programme objectives for the biennium 2010-2011.*

Table 1
Result frameworks of the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and United Nations support for NEPAD

Section 10. Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States	
Subprogramme	*Objective*
1. Least developed countries	To improve the quality of the lives of people in the least developed countries by strengthening their ability to build a better future for themselves and to develop their countries
2. Landlocked developing countries	To ensure effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries
3. Small island developing States	To effectively advocate for and mobilize international support for the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States
Section 11. United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development	
Subprogramme	*Objective*
1. Coordination of global advocacy of and support for NEPAD (Office of the Special Adviser on Africa)	To strengthen international cooperation in support of NEPAD and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa
2. Regional coordination of and support for NEPAD (implemented by the Economic Commission for Africa)	To strengthen United Nations system-wide support for the implementation of NEPAD at the regional and subregional levels
3. Public information and awareness activities in support of NEPAD (implemented by the Department of Public Information)	To raise international awareness of the critical economic and social situation in Africa, as well as the efforts made by Africa and the international community to promote the economic recovery and sustainable development of the region in pursuit of the goals of NEPAD and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

5. Further to the Regulations Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8), the objective of the evaluation was to assess, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the respective programme activities in relation to their mandates, and to propose enhancement as appropriate.

6. To conduct the evaluation, OIOS utilized the following evaluation methods:

(a) Self-administered staff surveys of all staff members of the Office of the High Representative and parts of the United Nations system supporting NEPAD,[3] which were conducted from August to September 2008. The response rates were 43 per cent (7 out of 16) and 38 per cent (12 out of 32), respectively;

(b) Two separate self-administered stakeholder surveys, conducted from 25 August to 30 September 2008, covering all Member States, the Secretariat programmes and the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, and other partners such as the regional economic communities of Africa, the NEPAD secretariat and the African Union Commission. The response rates were 14 per cent (45 out of 321) for the Office of the High Representative and 4 per cent (14 out of 395) for parts of the United Nations system supporting NEPAD;

(c) A survey of 65 resident coordinators;[4]

(d) A total of 194 in-depth interviews with United Nations Secretariat staff members in New York, Geneva, the regional commissions and selected subregional centres, partner agencies and Member State representatives;

(e) Desk reviews of relevant internal and public documents, including analysis of the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in respect of all 31 landlocked developing countries,[5] and programme data in the Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System and the electronic performance appraisal system;

(f) Direct observation of meetings of the regional consultative mechanism for Africa, the Pacific multi-country teams and the inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States, as well as the meetings and panel discussions in connection with the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action and the high-level meeting on Africa's development needs.

7. In addition, the current report incorporates select analysis and recommendations emanating from a separate OIOS audit report on the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa.[6] Specifically, under finding 8 (paras. 36 and 37), the current evaluation makes reference to the comparative analysis of the respective mandates of the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in support of small island developing States. This evaluation also reiterates in paragraph 47

[3] These include staff of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the NEPAD Support Unit of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), which implements subprogramme 2, the Office of Programme Planning and Monitoring of ECA and the Africa Section of the Department of Public Information, which implements subprogramme 3.

[4] All 49 least developed countries are covered by this survey. Nineteen resident coordinators based in small island countries are also included in the survey. Fourteen responses were received, for a response rate of 22 per cent. Only United Nations member countries are included in this survey, based on the list of small island developing States posted on the website of the Office of the High Representative (www.un.org/ohrlls).

[5] Analysis was conducted of the latest versions of the common country assessments and UNDAFs available at www.undg.org on 14 October 2008. No common country assessment was available for Burundi at the time of the analysis.

[6] AN2008/860/01, 27 January 2009.

recommendations 1 and 2 of the audits of the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, and makes five other recommendations.

8. In terms of limitations, OIOS noted the constraints posed by relatively low survey response rates, especially among stakeholders in United Nations support for NEPAD. In compensation, OIOS added a further series of interviews with Member State delegations from Africa, regional groups and partners.

B. Mandate, organization and resources of the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development

9. The Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 56/227, which also supplemented General Assembly resolution 55/279, endorsing the outcome of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, in accordance with the recommendations of the Secretary-General.[7] The key functions and objectives of the Office of the High Representative, corresponding to the internal division of subprogramme responsibilities, are advocating the mainstreaming of the following frameworks and monitoring and reporting on their implementation:[8]

- Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010[9]
- Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries[10]
- Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy[11] for its further implementation

[7] A/56/645 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and 2.

[8] The monitoring and reporting mandate is applicable for the Brussels and Almaty Programmes of Action. Monitoring and reporting on the implementation on the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy are the responsibility of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Small Island Developing States Unit (see paras. 36-37).

[9] Adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Brussels in 2001 and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/279. Its overarching goal is to make substantial progress towards halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and suffering from hunger by 2015 and promote the sustainable development of the least developed countries. The Programme of Action contains 30 international development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

[10] Adopted by the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 25 to 29 August 2003.

[11] The International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, held in January 2005, adopted the Mauritius Declaration and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/CONF.207/11 and Corr.1). The Mauritius Strategy was endorsed by the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

10. The mandate of United Nations support for NEPAD originated from General Assembly resolution 57/7, in which the Assembly called upon the United Nations system to align its own activities and to foster a coherent response at the national, regional and global levels to the New Partnership for Africa's Development. With its resolution 57/300, the Assembly decided moreover to create an internal United Nations structure to review and report on its own support and that of the international community, thus establishing the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. At the same time, an additional Secretariat programme and budget section was established, comprising the Office of the Special Adviser as one subprogramme, another for the coordination of regional NEPAD support activities (administered by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)) and a third subprogramme comprising information activities (administered by the Department of Public Information). While the United Nations support for NEPAD budget section thus comprised three subprogrammes, the Office of the Special Adviser was mandated to provide overall coordination and leadership, with particular responsibility for coordinating the interdepartmental task force on African affairs.[12]

11. For the biennium 2008-2009, the Office of the High Representative has an estimated total of $5.6 million in regular budgetary resources, comprising 11 posts at the Professional level and above and 4 posts at the General Service level. The Office of the High Representative also has $1.1 million in extrabudgetary resources. United Nations support for NEPAD has a regular budget of $11.2 million, comprising 22 posts at the Professional level and above and 11 General Service posts. Of the 33 posts, 21 are allocated to the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, 5 to ECA and 7 to the Department of Public Information. The extrabudgetary funding allocated to United Nations support for NEPAD, $470,000, is used solely by the Office of the Special Adviser. The heads of both the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (the Special Adviser) and the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (the High Representative) are at the Under-Secretary-General level. As from January 2008, the Under-Secretary-General for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States has also been tasked with the responsibilities of the Special Adviser on Africa (see paras. 41-43).

[12] A coordinating mechanism at the Headquarters level, established by the General Assembly in resolution 57/300.

Table 2
Budget estimates of the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development for 2006-2007 and 2008-2009
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2006-2007				2008-2009			
Programme	*Regular budget*	*Extrabudgetary*	*Total*	*Posts*	*Regular budget*	*Extrabudgetary*	*Total*	*Posts*
Office of the High Representative	5 052.7	2 849.4	**7 902.1**	15	5 569.4	1 120.5	**6 689.9**	15
United Nations support for NEPAD	10 803.1	745.3	**11 548.4**	32	11 186.3	470.0	**11 656.3**	33
Subprogramme 1 (Office of the Special Adviser on Africa)	7 070.3	745.3	**7 815.6**	21	7 360.1	470.0	**7 830.1**	21
Subprogramme 2 (ECA)	1 478.7	—	**1 478.7**	4	1 573.7	—	**1 573.7**	5
Subprogramme 3 (Department of Public Information)	2 254.1	—	**2 254.1**	7	2 252.5	—	**2 252.5**	7

Source: Data extracted from General Assembly document A/62/6 (Sect. 10) and (Sect. 11).

12. A diagram illustrating the relationship between the two programmes and their partner entities, as well as the multiple coordination mechanisms, is provided in the annex.

III. Evaluation findings

A. Assessment of programme outcomes

Finding 1*: United Nations support for NEPAD and the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States have brought increased global-level attention to the respective categories of countries in need. However, their advocacy has had little influence on the availability and programming of United Nations country-level resources.*

13. OIOS finds that United Nations support for NEPAD and the Office of the High Representative have helped bring a higher degree of visibility to the development needs of the countries forming their representative constituencies. Explicit emphasis on Africa and the importance of United Nations support for NEPAD has been highlighted in the Organization's biennial programme plan for the five consecutive bienniums since 2002. A majority of stakeholders interviewed by OIOS acknowledge positive effects emanating from some of the advocacy and activities of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, most notably the Special Adviser's active engagement in various South-South cooperation initiatives and African-led forums, including the high-level meeting on Africa's development needs. Likewise,

OIOS finds that the Office of the High Representative has contributed to the emerging consensus that the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States share special development needs and challenges unique to their respective groups. Interview data strongly confirm that the efforts of the Office of the High Representative should be directly credited with bringing the focus of the General Assembly onto the landlocked developing countries agenda in particular. Its efforts have, moreover, helped galvanize United Nations-system programme activities in the areas of transit transport and trade facilitation around one global framework, which were previously dispersed among separate regional and subregional initiatives. OIOS nevertheless notes that landlocked developing countries and small island developing States have yet to be recognized by the World Trade Organization in its negotiation of preferential trade considerations.

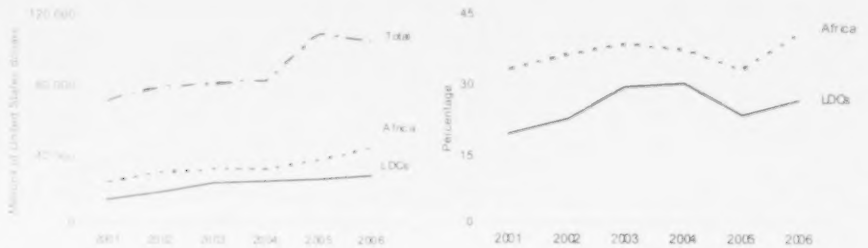
14. However, advocacy has not consistently influenced country-level programme planning of the United Nations country teams. Feedback received by OIOS illustrates that country-level programming did not always take guidance from the Brussels Programme of Action, which was adopted shortly after the Millennium Development Goals and was tailored to the special needs of least developed countries. Half of the country teams that responded to the resident coordinator survey found that the Brussels Programme of Action had not influenced national priorities and development plans, in contrast to the Millennium Development Goals. The Brussels Programme of Action was viewed by many as being in parallel to the Millennium Development Goals or as a follow-up mechanism. Similarly, for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, the linkage between advocacy and guidance at the global level and the programmatic activities of United Nations entities in support of national Governments is missing. For example, none of the common country assessments or UNDAFs of the landlocked developing countries makes any reference to the Almaty Programme of Action. Only one common country assessment makes explicit reference to the country being landlocked and the associated special challenges, albeit without reference to the Almaty Programme of Action. Fewer than half of the 31 UNDAFs make such references, and even fewer have incorporated programme support corresponding to their special needs in the area of transit transport and trade facilitation.

15. OIOS notes that the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa were mandated to mobilize international support and resources for the benefit of their respective constituent countries. However, it is not possible to attribute the positive trend in resources available for least developed countries and Africa directly to the advocacy or fund-raising efforts of these two programmes. In this respect, OIOS notes that the nominal volume of total aid flow to both Africa and least developed countries registered significant increases over the past few years. The figures for 2006, $43.4 billion for Africa and $28 billion for least developed countries, were approximately double what they were in 2001. The share of total aid flows accounted for by allocation to Africa and least developed countries also increased during the same period. In addition, the total volume of annual United Nations expenditures increased from $2.2 billion for Africa and $2.5 billion for least developed countries in 2001 to $5.6 billion and $5.3 billion, respectively, by 2006. From 2001 to 2006 the percentage of United Nations-system expenditure devoted to operational activities in Africa increased from 31 per cent to 44 per cent and from 34 per cent to 42 per cent for least developed countries. OIOS

notes that the Office of the High Representative, apart from mobilizing international support and resources, has raised extrabudgetary funds for its own programme implementation, including to organize a series of meetings in preparation for the midterm reviews of the Brussels and Almaty Programmes of Action, and to provide support for increased participation of least developed country representatives in the annual substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council. Although the latter was commended by the beneficiary countries, concerns were expressed by some Member States over how long this particular fund-raising initiative could be sustained.

Figure I

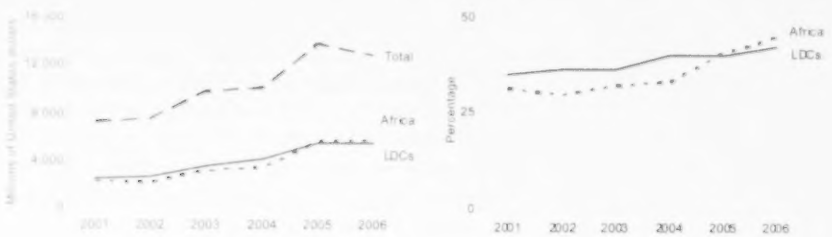
Total official development assistance to Africa and least developed countries



Source: Data extracted from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development statistics database; official development assistance figures are total net disbursement from all donors in 2006 constant price.

Figure II

Total United Nations expenditure on Africa and least developed countries



Source: Data extracted from documents A/63/71, A/62/74, A/61/77 and A/60/74. The figures for United Nations expenditures are in nominal term/current prices.

***Finding 2**: Involvement with multiple coordinating mechanisms is event-driven and adds little value in enhancing system-wide coordinated actions.*

16. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States are both members of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs and of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). OIOS notes that the Office of the Special Adviser and the Office of the High Representative are both very small actors with no operational activities and

hardly any influence on others. Interviews with the secretariats of the coordinating bodies show that the participation of the Office of the Special Adviser was limited to general briefings and sharing of information on events.

17. The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs cluster on countries in special situations, convened by the Office of the High Representative, is active at the time of programme budget preparation. The General Assembly took note of advocacy strategy for further implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action[13] in its resolution 62/203, but it is yet to be supported by an operational plan, which the Office of the High Representative should have developed in consultation with other partners. The United Nations action plan for the further implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action during the period 2007-2010, which requests the resident coordinators and United Nations country teams to facilitate the United Nations-wide response to the conclusions of the midterm review at the country level, was recently endorsed by UNDG.[14] However, OIOS notes that no immediate actions are foreseen, as country teams need further clarification on the actions needed to move forward on the action plan.

18. The Office of the High Representative convenes two inter-agency consultative groups, on least developed country and landlocked developing country issues. OIOS notes that the influence of these two groups has been limited and that they have not been active in ongoing consultations either. Interviews with selected least developed country focal points of United Nations agencies confirm the lack of regular consultation. The inter-agency consultative group on landlocked developing country issues[15] has managed to maintain more frequent contacts with its members and hence played a positive role in the preparation process for the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action. It is, however, not found to be sufficiently consultative by some members.

19. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa has the mandate to convene and coordinate the interdepartmental task force on African affairs.[16] However, information made available to OIOS shows that meetings and related activities have been sporadic.[17] Interviews with some task force members show the lack of a shared vision in the group. OIOS takes note of the Secretary-General's conclusion that "there is a tendency ... to support a proliferation of Africa-related activities which creates incoherence and sub-optimal use of scarce resources".[18] The task force has not presented any solutions in response to the call at the policy level for rationalization and coordination. However, OIOS acknowledges the external factors that posed challenges to the coordination of United Nations entities to work with Africa in promoting and implementing NEPAD. They include progress by the

[13] A/62/322.

[14] See http://www.undg.org/docs/9486/Final-UNDG-Meeting-Report-24th-September-2008-1_JKP.doc.

[15] Members of the inter-agency consultative group on landlocked developing country issues and the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action include the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the World Bank.

[16] See resolution 57/300 and ST/SGB/2003/6.

[17] AN2008/860/01, paras. 61 and 62.

[18] A/63/130, para. 48.

African continent in developing national, subregional and regional coordination and programme implementation.

20. OIOS notes very limited involvement by the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser in regional-level coordination, though the Office of the Special Adviser does convene the advocacy and communication cluster of the regional coordination mechanism for Africa.[19] In Africa, ECA, in charge of subprogramme 2, is responsible for providing backstopping support to the regional coordination mechanism. The capacity of ECA to backstop the mechanism seems limited, with five staff members and a budget equivalent to 0.03 per cent of the total United Nations-system expenditure in Africa.[20] Capacity would be seriously inadequate should ECA seek a more proactive role in facilitating cluster coordination and interaction between clusters. In other regions, the regional coordination mechanism sometimes has a different format. For example, in Asia it is chaired by the regional commission and faces the challenge of establishing synergy with the regional directors' teams as utilized by United Nations funds and programmes. OIOS does not find that the Office of the High Representative has been involved in any of the regional coordination mechanisms. Collaboration with regional United Nations entities has been driven by the need to organize the midterm reviews of the Brussels and Almaty Programmes of Action. OIOS therefore concludes that the prospects seem remote for the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser to contribute at the regional level.

***Finding 3**: Support for the functioning of the intergovernmental bodies is not effective.*

21. OIOS finds that the Office of the High Representative faced serious challenge in effectively monitoring the implementation of the Programmes of Action.[21] The inter-agency consultative groups on least developed country and landlocked developing country issues (see para. 18) have not played a role in this respect. Although the Office of the High Representative, at the request of the Economic and Social Council[22] started in 2005 to produce the annual report on the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in a new format and provided information on a series of indicators,[23] it highlighted this undertaking as challenging, as the Office did not have the necessary technical expertise and was relying on consultants for producing this recurrent output. A number of Member States express the view that through closer collaboration with Member States and partner agencies, the Office of the High Representative could make better use of the existing reporting mechanisms, such as the national Millennium Development Goal report process and

[19] The regional coordination mechanism consists of nine clusters, headed by ECA, the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. It involves all United Nations agencies working in Africa.

[20] $5.6 billion in 2006 (A/63/71).

[21] A/CONF.191/13, para. 93: "Follow-up, monitoring and review of the [Brussels] Programme of Action ... should involve all relevant stakeholders. They should be conducted in a coherent and mutually supportive manner. Consequently, well-functioning linkages should be built among different levels of follow-up."

[22] Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/65, para. 6.

[23] A/63/77 provided an analysis of 38 indicators and 2 initiatives to enhance transparency in extractive industries.

the inter-agency framework for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals. *The Office of the High Representative commented that this annual report was the only source where data related to all least developed countries in various aspects were categorized.* OIOS finds that one third of the indicators used in the Secretary-General's annual report on the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action are also Millennium Development Goal indicators, and the retabulation of data from different sources in itself does not provide additional analytical value.

22. The Office of the High Representative contact with and support for the three respective Coordination Bureaux are not considered sufficiently proactive, in particular as regards small island developing States and least developed countries, as shown by stakeholder interviews conducted by OIOS. Views have been expressed that such support appeared to lack dynamism and were very often tightly bound by the objective of producing draft documents on time. Nonetheless, OIOS acknowledges the recent improvement in this respect since the appointment of the new High Representative. *The Office of the High Representative commented that support for the intergovernmental processes and different coordination groups was the most positive contribution of the Office of the High Representative. Such support is reflected in several aspects, including (a) servicing the negotiations of the Second Committee, (b) organizing the first-ever United Nations conference devoted to landlocked developing countries and preparing the annual progress report on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, (c) assisting in organizing annual ministerial meetings of landlocked developing countries and least developed countries to agree on their coordinated position during General Assembly sessions and beyond and (d) organizing midterm reviews of the Brussels and Almaty Programmes of Action.*

23. Annual reports prepared by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa on United Nations and international support for NEPAD and on the causes of conflict in Africa have elicited a large number of recommendations of the General Assembly. The prevalent view of stakeholders is that it could be made more analytical and include proposed actions for easier follow-up. OIOS notes that data collection was limited to input from United Nations agencies. OIOS finds that the exercise did not capture the whole picture of international support for NEPAD and that the value added by the Office of the Special Adviser was minimal in building knowledge or providing information for evidence-based decision-making.

***Finding 4**: The public information subprogramme under United Nations support for NEPAD is not clearly linked to a strategy for the programme as a whole.*

24. Implementation of its public information mandate of United Nations support for NEPAD falls into three categories. The largest cluster of public information activity is *Africa Renewal*, a print magazine published quarterly by the Department of Public Information, which is also leveraged into various other print and online information products. Next, there is a more limited range of other information activities also produced by the Department of Public Information. Lastly, there are public information activities that are undertaken outside of the Department of Public Information-managed subprogramme. OIOS observes firstly that there appears to be little coordination among these clusters of information activity — each of them appears to operate in relative isolation. *The Department of Public Information commented that the three subprogrammes have collaborated on an ongoing basis over the years with the aim of achieving a greater focus and a clearer division of*

labour. Some common initiatives were identified and undertaken. Secondly, roughly 74 per cent of the resources under subprogramme 3 are devoted to *Africa Renewal*. *The Department of Public Information commented that not all Department of Public Information involvement in non-magazine activities could be measured by resources under subprogramme 3. For some NEPAD- or Africa-related events, the Department drew on its broad range of services, including by utilizing the wide network of United Nations information centres*. OIOS notes that weak coordination among the three subprogrammes was partially a result of the lack of a public-information strategy that could guide programme design and implementation of United Nations support for NEPAD in this aspect. OIOS stresses that such a public-information strategy for the programme as a whole is needed in order to ensure that coordination bears fruit and that the limited resources given to United Nations support for NEPAD are used more efficiently.

B. Structure and strategic planning

25. In short, the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and United Nations support for NEPAD have helped sustain policy attention to the development requirements of the countries with special needs. However, in most mandated areas, programme achievements, including the organization of high-level events, are at the output level. OIOS finds that the underlying reasons for the absence of outcome fell into three categories: inherent tension between interpretations of mandate and limited capacities, misalignment of programme structures and weak strategic planning.

***Finding 5**: The Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD face inherent tension between high expectations and limited capacities.*

26. OIOS observes that there are disparate interpretations by stakeholders and programme staff of the broad mandates of the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD. OIOS notes a wide spectrum of definitions and multiple expectations among staff, partners and constituent countries. Such varied interpretations have led to serious confusion about what the programmes' mandates mean, what the priorities of the programmes should be and what should be expected at the outcome level on the basis of sufficient support from available resources.

27. When it comes to advocacy for the benefit of the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD constituent countries broadly, there are multiple aspirants — even within the United Nations system itself. For example, some stakeholders think that given the resources that the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD command, it is only reasonable to expect that their advocacy efforts are focused on support for the intergovernmental debate. Others make a strong case that advocacy and fund-raising must be linked; advocacy without generating increased resource flows at some level is not needed. OIOS notes that the ambiguity as to what the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD could advocate for, and to which audience, arises from the divergent views among Member States and United Nations partners. OIOS notes similar ambiguous views, and sometimes unrealistic expectations given the level of resources, regarding other aspects of the mandates of the two programmes.

28. Considering that the institutional context within which the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa are operating is extremely complex, OIOS emphasizes that the tension must be reconciled through concerted efforts by Member States and the two programmes to bring more clarity to what should be reasonably expected of the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD. This will be an important step to enhance the relevance of the programmes. As illustrated in the annex, the majority of resources and activities of the United Nations common system in support of the countries with special needs and Africa are in the hands of the entities outside the Secretariat. There are multiple coordination mechanisms in the area of socio-economic issues and development.

***Finding 6**: Sharpened programmatic focus and better formulated strategic frameworks are needed.*

29. OIOS is of the opinion that efforts to focus the existing resources on attainable achievements are imperative for the programmes' effectiveness. A stronger programmatic focus — or a clearly defined niche — will be required to leverage their delivery capacity. While a slight majority (55 per cent) of the responses to the stakeholder survey identify the strong mandate and political visibility as among the most important strengths of the Office of the High Representative, a larger majority of stakeholders are of the opinion that the Office of the High Representative has been unable to leverage such strength and bring coherence to partner agencies' efforts around selected programmatic areas.

30. Similar lack of clarity is recognized by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa in its "Advocacy and communication update" of December 2007, which clearly highlights the need for the Office of the Special Adviser to discuss and agree on the nature and substance of its advocacy role. OIOS notes that no such attempt has yet borne fruit in developing an advocacy strategy for the Office of the Special Adviser or United Nations support for NEPAD as a whole. Moreover, the lack of programmatic focus in advocacy has contributed to the ineffectiveness of the Office of the Special Adviser in securing the buy-in of other United Nations entities. Of the 23 initiatives proposed by the Office of the Special Adviser in its "Advocacy and communication update", 21 have not materialized.

31. OIOS finds that the two programmes' logical frameworks for the biennium 2008-2009 are not formulated in compliance with organizational requirements and guidelines pertaining to results-based budgeting. They consequently do not easily enable performance assessment or serve to guide programme planning. Programme objectives and expected accomplishments are too broad and unrealistic, given the level of resources. An example in this case is the subprogramme 1 objective of the Office of the High Representative — "to improve the quality of lives of people in the least developed countries by strengthening their ability to build a better future for themselves and to develop their countries".[24] Such an objective clearly does not help the programme to narrow down its focus in fulfilling its mandates. An analysis by OIOS shows that nearly half of the expected accomplishments do not closely reflect the overall programme objectives and invite subjective interpretations.

32. The indicators of achievement are not precise measurements of expected accomplishments. For example, increased numbers of joint activities are not

[24] A/62/6 (Sect. 10).

indicative of any achievement or lack of achievement in improving coordination. OIOS analysis shows that more than 60 per cent of the indicators of achievement do not provide information on the extent to which the corresponding expected accomplishments have been achieved. In some instances, the selection of an inappropriate indicator of achievement contributes to the already confused understanding of what the programmes are mandated to achieve. For example, the Office of the High Representative listed the number of countries that provide more than 0.1 per cent of gross national income to least developed countries as one of its indicators of achievement for the biennium 2008-2009, implying that the Office of the High Representative will be expected to have an impact on flows of official development assistance.

33. Moreover, indicators of achievement do not reflect how significant the programmes' contributions to the intended achievement are. While this weakness is not unique to the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD, OIOS notes that the percentages of weak indicators of achievement (80 per cent and 70 per cent respectively) are particularly high in this case. OIOS also notes duplicative indicators of achievement across the three subprogrammes of United Nations support for NEPAD, mirroring the lack of integrated result-oriented planning processes. OIOS emphasizes that sharpened programmatic focus and better-formulated strategic frameworks will help all stakeholders involved to reach an agreement on the appropriate niche for the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD.

***Finding 7**: United Nations support for NEPAD budget and subprogramme structure are misaligned with the chain of accountability.*

34. OIOS notes that the position of Under-Secretary-General for the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa does not have de facto authority over two United Nations support for NEPAD subprogrammes, namely, those managed by ECA and the Department of Public Information. These subprogrammes function as entities subject to the planning, daily management and systems of accountability of their respective "hosts" rather than the Under-Secretary-General. It is the heads of the Department of Public Information and ECA who "control" these subprogrammes: establishing workplans, planning and reporting on posts and other resources, monitoring and evaluating operational activity, conducting performance reviews and exercising accountability for the managers and staff.

35. The current Under-Secretary-General for the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser has two separate compacts with the Secretary-General, one for the Office of the High Representative and one for subprogramme 1 of United Nations support for NEPAD, but not for the other subprogrammes of budget section 11. In the compact of the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information, subprogramme 3 is listed as one responsibility. Subprogramme 2, however, is not listed in the compact of the Under-Secretary-General for ECA. OIOS understands that this phenomenon precedes the current interim arrangement under which the Under-Secretary-General for the Office of the High Representative has also been designated head of the Office of the Special Adviser. Be this as it may, OIOS finds no senior official in charge of United Nations support for NEPAD as a whole, comprising a distinct United Nations Secretariat programme and budget section. OIOS also finds, further to multiple testimonials, that the head of the Office of the Special Adviser has been limited in his ability to exert influence over

subprogrammes 2 and 3, and that, at the operational level, there has been little coordination among the three subprogrammes.

Finding 8: *The parallel Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs arrangement, amid a fragmented structure in support of small island developing States, needs closer coordination.*

36. In respect of United Nations support for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, corresponding to the small island developing States arena, OIOS finds that there is a high degree of overlap in functions of the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. At the time of the establishment of the Office of the High Representative through General Assembly resolution 56/227, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Small Island Developing States Unit was already in existence further to resolution 49/122.

37. According to General Assembly resolution 59/311, the role of the Small Island Developing States Unit is to provide substantive support to intergovernmental and inter-agency processes related to the monitoring, review and coordination of the implementation of the Small Island Developing States programme and act as the focal point for Governments, the United Nations system and other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The Office of the High Representative, on the other hand, will perform activities relating to advocacy and the mobilization of international support and resources on behalf of the small island developing States. OIOS finds that these roles have not been clearly distinguished in practice. A review of work programmes and outputs for the period between 2004 and 2007 reveals many items and activities that are very similar in nature. Also, stakeholders are unclear in their understanding of the respective responsibilities. OIOS acknowledges the efforts by the Office of the High Representative and the Small Island Developing States Unit to improve collaboration since the appointment of the new High Representative.

38. Moreover, the Office of the High Representative and the Small Island Developing States Unit operate within a larger, fragmented institutional set-up in support of the follow-up to the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) complements the work of the Small Island Developing States Unit with respect to formulating the vulnerability index and profile.[25] The United Nations Environment Programme is mandated to provide policy guidance and coordination in the field of environment[26] and has a programme on protecting sea resources involving island and coastal countries. The regional commissions are also specifically requested to coordinate the regional follow-up of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The inter-agency consultative group convened by the Small Island Developing States Unit has not been able to bring coherence to the fragmented efforts.[27] Interviews with members of the inter-agency consultative group reveal that consultations occurring within the group seem to be limited to organizing the annual session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. There were many instances

[25] The vulnerability index is a policy analysis tool designed to provide insights into the processes that might influence negatively the economic and sustainable development of countries.

[26] A/CONF.167/9, para 125.

[27] AN2008/860/1, paras. 20-21, provides an overview of the evolution of the inter-agency coordination since 2003.

in which feedback provided at the inter-agency consultative group was not followed up by the convener. Small island developing States have relied mostly on their own regional intergovernmental organizations, namely, the Pacific Islands Forum, the Caribbean Community and Indian Ocean Commission, or bilateral support. Stakeholders based at the regional or subregional level express the view that the advocacy by the Headquarters-based programmes — the Small Island Developing States Unit, the Office of the High Representative and UNCTAD — have not sufficiently conveyed messages unique to their respective regions, particularly as small island developing States are a diverse group with countries at different stages of development.

39. Interview data show that the support from the United Nations Secretariat programmes for the majority of small island developing States was coordinated through the subregional offices of the regional commissions, namely the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Pacific Operations Centre and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean Caribbean subregional office.[28] These offices lack sufficient capacity and need guidance in advocating mainstreaming of the Mauritius Strategy. In many cases, these offices are not engaging actively with United Nations country teams because of these limitations. As the United Nations funds and programmes have been relocating their regional programmes to the regional centres, the regional commissions face new challenges in ensuring the most efficient coordination of all United Nations entities at the regional level.

40. Considering the limited numbers of regular posts dedicated to small island developing States issues in those Secretariat programmes,[29] OIOS finds it important to align advocacy efforts with the analytical strength offered by others, including UNCTAD and the regional commissions, by way of strengthened coordination, including a joint workplan.

Finding 9: *Potential for synergy between the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD, as small offices with overlapping mandates, has not been exploited.*

41. The Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD share mandates to sustain international support through advocacy, to service intergovernmental forums and to coordinate and mobilize system-wide follow-up to given policy frameworks. OIOS notes the considerable overlaps that exist between the countries that the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD cover. Of the 53 African countries covered by the latter, 37 (70 per cent)

[28] In Africa, the Indian Ocean Commission plays the key role of coordination and participates in the informal consultative meetings hosted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. A few other small island developing States of Africa are not members of any of the intergovernmental bodies.

[29] Interviews with different programmes show that only a few staff have been dedicated to programme activities for the benefits of small island developing States: Office of the High Representative (1 P-2, 1 D-1 part-time), the Small Island Developing States Unit (1 P-5, 1 L-4 and 1 P-2), UNCTAD (1 P-4), ESCAP (1 D-1 and 1 P-4), and ECLAC (1 P-5 part-time and 1 P-4). Support from staff at the General Service level is usually shared. *The Department of Economic and Social Affairs commented that the Small Island Developing States Unit has four Professional posts (1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 P-2 and 1 L-4) and two General Service (1 G-6 and 1 G-4), two of which are currently vacant.* OIOS would like to further highlight that in some instances posts under small island developing States programmes as shown on paper are not used as intended.

are also covered under one or more of the Office of the High Representative programmes. Conversely, more than one third of the 90 countries that the Office of the High Representative covers are in Africa. The degree of overlap would be considerably greater if calculated in terms of population rather than number of countries.

42. The finding of OIOS is that few efforts have been made to exploit the substantial potential for coordination and synergy between the two offices in servicing their mandates. Further to the proposed revised estimates for 2008-2009,[30] the Secretary-General has proposed that a single Under-Secretary-General be placed in the leadership of the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (but not the other two United Nations support for NEPAD subprogrammes), thereby consolidating authority and responsibility in order to obtain a greater degree of coherence and coordination. A single Under-Secretary-General has in fact, with effect from 22 January 2008, been acting in charge of both. The advocacy and administrative functions of the offices, however, remain fully separate. OIOS finds that there are considerable economies of scale, e.g., pertaining to executive and front-office functions, potentially available from combining such functions of these two relatively small offices. Currently, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Office of the High Representative dedicate 29 and 20 per cent of their staff, respectively, to front-office functions.

43. Although the Secretary-General's proposal for an alignment of functions[31] did not meet with initial favour,[32] the view of OIOS is that it has merit, because there are objective prospects for efficiency gains. OIOS reiterates its earlier opinion that a concrete plan for combining the administrative and advocacy functions should be established and submitted to the General Assembly for its approval.

IV. Conclusions

44. OIOS concludes that the two programmes, United Nations support for NEPAD and the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, have contributed to the increased awareness of the special development needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and Africa. This has, in particular, translated into more visibility for the respective programmes of action and for NEPAD within the agenda and deliberations of the United Nations itself — where there appears to be a stronger consensus on the particular needs of these country categories.

45. OIOS notes that the overall performance of the two programmes has to be viewed in the context of the systemic weaknesses of the United Nations planning and budgeting process, including the disconnection between expected accomplishments, outputs and resources. These weaknesses were extensively documented in the OIOS report on results-based management.[33] For these two

[30] A/62/708.

[31] The Secretary-General's letter to Jean-Marie Ehouzou, Permanent Representative of Benin and Chairman of the African Group, 30 October 2007.

[32] In its resolution 63/260 the General Assembly decided not to abolish the post of Special Adviser on Africa.

[33] A/63/268.

programmes with serious resources constraints, the inherent tension must be reconciled with efforts by both Member States and the programmes themselves to ensure that the programme objectives are realistic given the available resources, and considered relevant by all beneficiary Member States.

46. The view of OIOS is that, in spite of the existing structural constraints facing the two programmes, efficiency and effectiveness could be improved significantly by immediate measures to delineate a clear programmatic focus. Formulating a better-quality logical framework and strengthening programme and human resources management should also be addressed. For the gaps in the programme and human resources management of these two programmes, the OIOS audit report on the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa — provides a comprehensive analysis. OIOS also stresses that a robust accountability chain needs to be established for the three subprogrammes of United Nations support for NEPAD. The potential for synergy between the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD, and between the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Small Island Developing States Unit, needs to be fully explored.

V. Recommendations

47. While OIOS concludes that the misalignment between expectations, capacities and accountability arrangements hinders programmatic focus and attainment of results, it has identified a number of actions to address the situation. Before proceeding to the recommendations that emanate from the current evaluation, OIOS would like to reiterate its earlier recommendations (see also recommendations 1 and 2 of the OIOS audit of the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser):

(a) The Secretary-General should review the entire programmatic structure for both the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser in order to reduce the overlap and duplication in providing services for the targeted countries;

(b) The Secretary-General should submit the reformulated proposal to the General Assembly for prior approval in accordance with United Nations regulations.

Recommendation 1

48. The Secretary-General should undertake a review of the subprogramme structure within United Nations support for NEPAD, with the aim of bringing three subprogrammes under the responsibility and oversight of one senior officer, for consideration by the General Assembly.

Recommendation 2

49. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, ECA and the Department of Public Information should undertake a joint strategic planning exercise so as to translate the United Nations support for NEPAD mandate into a clearly defined programmatic focus for each of the three areas — advocacy, coordination and public information. *The Office of the Special Adviser informed OIOS that it has already*

initiated discussions with ECA and the Department of Public Information on this issue.

50. Strategies thus formulated should clarify the respective roles and define the different operational responsibilities of the three subprogrammes and be communicated to their partners and stakeholders. Such conclusions should form the basis for a revision of the strategic framework of programme 9/section 11, for consideration by the General Assembly.

Recommendation 3

51. The programme of United Nations support for NEPAD (prog. 9/sect. 11) should consider formulating a proposal for the purpose of strengthening the backstopping support for the regional consultative mechanism, by way of (a) the provision of additional resources, (b) the reassignment of staffing resources within United Nations support for NEPAD or (c) secondment from other United Nations entities, for the consideration of the General Assembly.

Recommendation 4

52. The Office of the High Representative should work in consultation with Member States and United Nations partners to translate the broad mandates into a clearly defined strategic focus. Taking into account the consultatively formulated strategic focus, the Office of the High Representative should revise its strategic framework to:

(a) Take into consideration the analytical capacity of other United Nations partners;

(b) Streamline and consolidate its inter-agency coordination efforts through fewer platforms;

(c) Establish regular contacts with the coordination bureaux of the constituent countries, including through providing backstopping support to the meetings of the coordination bodies;

(d) Ensure that subprogramme objectives are actionable;

(e) Formulate an external communication strategy that specifies how to ensure that the strategic focus of the Office of the High Representative is articulated clearly to external stakeholders and partners, and make wider use of modern information technology, in particular web-based teleconference facilities, to ensure more interactive dialogue.

Recommendation 5

53. OIOS recommends that the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs develop a joint action plan with the aim of bringing coherence and providing guidance to the United Nations system efforts in support of small island developing States. The joint action plan should clearly delineate the respective roles of the offices and facilitate effective communication regarding their different roles to their stakeholders. The action plan should also provide specific guidance on:

(a) How each subregion's needs will be met, based on a mapping of existing programmatic efforts;

(b) How the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Small Island Developing States Unit separately contribute to more coordinated United Nations-wide efforts;

(c) What support these offices will provide for regional programme efforts, in particular in terms of supporting the regional commissions in their regional coordination role.

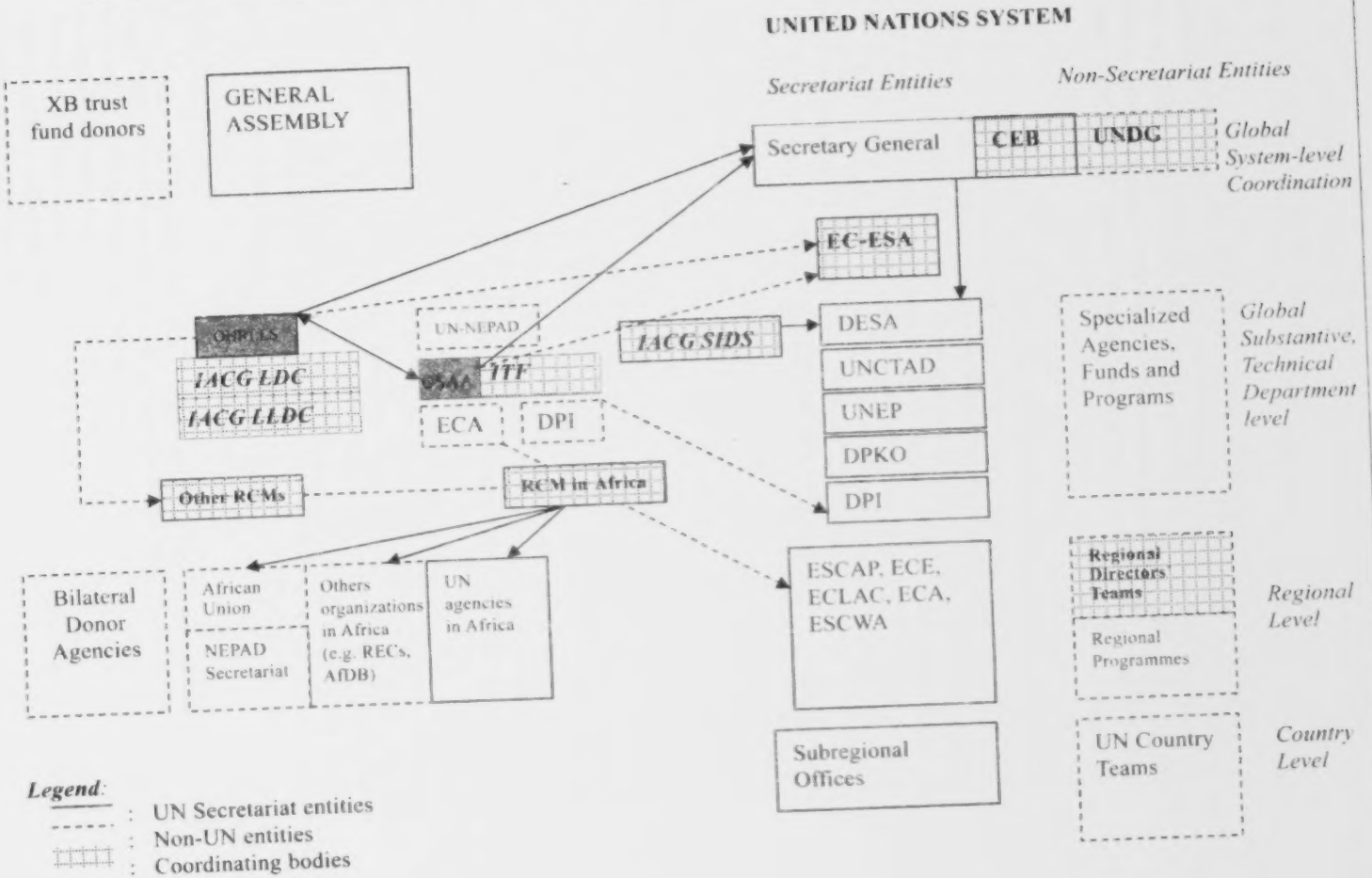
54. *The Department of Economic and Social Affairs objected to this recommendation and commented that the mandates of the two offices have already been defined by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/311: the Department of Economic and Social Affairs dealing with monitoring, review and coordination of the implementation of small island developing States programmes and the Office of the High Representative with advocacy, mobilization of support and resources for small island developing States. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs confirmed that it would take necessary steps to revitalize the inter-agency consultative mechanism.* Recalling its earlier recommendation from the audit of the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa,[34] OIOS takes note that the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs have committed to collaborate at the time of programme budget preparation and through the yearly reviews by the Executive Committee for Economic and Social Affairs, two of which have been conducted to date. OIOS wishes to stress that the present recommendation went a step further than collaborative planning. Instead, it aims to rectify the situations whereby the stakeholders of the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Small Island Developing States Unit were not aware of the difference in the mandates and practices of the two offices and the questioning of duplication of efforts was common. The implementation of this recommendation would ensure that the resources provided to the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs are used effectively to achieve distinct objectives and synergy is built among the programme activities of various United Nations entities.

(*Signed*) Inga-Britt **Ahlenius**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services
2 April 2009

[34] AN2008/806/01, recommendation 3.

Annex

The Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the New Partnership for Africa's Development within a complex institutional set-up



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Triennial review of the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-sixth session on the in-depth evaluation of political affairs

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) is submitted in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-sixth session in 2006 to review the implementation of its recommendations three years after taking decisions on its evaluations. This triennial review determines whether or not recommendations from the in-depth evaluation of political affairs (E/AC.51/2006/4), which focused on subprogramme 1, have been implemented. The Committee endorsed all 10 recommendations contained in the report.

OIOS finds that 4 of the 10 OIOS recommendations have been implemented. The conflict-prevention strategy of the Department of Political Affairs is outlined in the Secretary-General's 2006 progress report (A/60/891), although the report has not yet received specific endorsement by the General Assembly. The creation of 49 new posts, approved by the Assembly in its resolution 63/261 in 2008 as part of the Department's strengthening exercise, should increase the capacity of the Department to implement its conflict-prevention strategy. OIOS notes that the Department has

* E/AC.51/2009/1.

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sufficiently clarified its role as focal point for conflict prevention and how the regional divisions are to support that role, outlined in the report of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates related to the proposed programme budget and the draft Secretary-General's bulletin on the organization of the Department. The Department has undergone a limited change management process, including the development of a human resource strategy and the restructuring of its two mega-divisions — the Asia and the Pacific Division and the Americas and Europe Division — into two separate divisions each. In addition, the Department has developed a protocol for information collection and a framework for conflict analysis.

While OIOS recognizes progress made towards strengthening inter-agency communications, in particular through the work of its Framework Team, the mediation focal point system, and the integrated task forces at the country level, it urges the Department of Political Affairs to conduct a needs assessment of its partnerships and develop a formal concept for collaboration with its external partners.

The Department has increased its cooperation with the African Union, in particular through a series of desk-to-desk dialogues, as well as with the European Union, yet such progress has not been extended to its relations with other regional organizations within the framework of the agreed-upon modalities for cooperation. OIOS also notes that the Department does not have a knowledge management strategy, although it has developed a draft evaluation policy, which was approved by its management in 2009. OIOS encourages the Department to conduct an external evaluation of its trust funds.

Most regional divisions have not incorporated gender-mainstreaming goals into their workplans or demonstrated that they have designated gender focal points. Finally, OIOS noted that, at the level of most of the divisions, established management plans were not linked to the broader goals of the Department or to the individual workplans of staff.

I. Introduction

1. At its forty-sixth session in 2006, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the in-depth evaluation of political affairs (E/AC.51/2006/4), which focused on subprogramme 1, and the comments of the Secretary-General thereon (E/AC.51/2006/4/Add.1). The Committee endorsed all 10 recommendations contained in the report (A/61/16, para. 387).

2. The present report is issued pursuant to the triennial review of those recommendations, and examines the current status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the report. The objective of this triennial review is to report on the extent of implementation of the recommendations made on the in-depth evaluation of political affairs. The review does not include an assessment of the outcomes or impact of implementing the recommendations.

3. The methodology for the triennial review includes (a) a review and analysis of biennial progress reports on the status of recommendations that are monitored through the OIOS Issue Track database; (b) an analysis of relevant information, documents and reports obtained from the Department of Political Affairs; (c) interviews with programme managers, desk officers and staff in the Department; and (d) a survey of regional organizations. A draft of the report was made available to the Department for review, and the comments received have been incorporated in the report.

II. Findings

4. Overall, OIOS finds that four of the recommendations have been implemented and six are in progress (see table 2 for a summary of the implementation status of each of the recommendations and remaining actions to be taken).

Recommendation 1: The Department of Political Affairs and the regional divisions should, as a matter of priority, take the initiative in working with relevant United Nations partners to develop and propose a system-wide strategy to better address intra-State and transnational conflicts.

The Department of Political Affairs commented that development of such a strategy would involve the United Nations system as a whole and, as such, it should be taken together with recommendation 3 below.

5. OIOS notes that the Department has made significant progress towards the implementation of this recommendation in the past three years. Previously, the Department had noted that the implementation of such a strategy would depend on strengthened regional divisions, including focal points for conflict prevention and mediation. In his 2007 report on revised estimates relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 under section 1, Overall policymaking, direction and coordination, section 3, Political affairs, section 28D, Office of Central Support Services, and section 35, Staff assessment, related to the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs (A/62/521 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General requested additional resources to support the cooperation of the Department with other actors in the United Nations system. In its resolution 63/261, the General Assembly approved the creation of 49 new posts in the Department,

including 27 in the regional divisions. OIOS notes that those posts will be filled by end of 2009, and trusts that this will significantly strengthen the capacity of the Department in its conflict-prevention work.

6. In 2006, the Department of Political Affairs established the Mediation Support Unit as a centre of expertise, best practice and knowledge management on mediation-related activities, providing both institutional and operational support to mediators and their teams. OIOS notes that the Department now has two focal point systems on mediation. The first is a Department-wide system that has been operational since 2006; meetings are held every two weeks to plan and coordinate mechanisms to support ongoing peace operations and to develop appropriate mediation-support policy and guidance. The second is a United Nations-wide focal point system that was launched in January 2009; meetings are held monthly to provide mediation support to the wider United Nations system in order to create synergy and strengthen its collective capacity in identifying early entry points for preventive diplomacy and action.

7. OIOS notes that the Department also currently chairs (jointly with the World Food Programme) the Inter-agency Framework for Coordination on preventive action (Framework Team), which provides coordinated inter-agency support to Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams.[1] Within the context of the Framework Team, peace and development advisers assist national counterparts in developing and implementing their own conflict-prevention initiatives.

8. OIOS notes that the Secretary-General outlined the Department's conflict-prevention strategy in 2006 in his progress report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891). The report includes recommendations for addressing systemic sources of tension and strengthening global norms and institutions for peace, and emphasizes the importance of all relevant players acting in concert. The report, however, has not yet received specific endorsement from the General Assembly.

9. OIOS considers this recommendation implemented. However, OIOS notes that the conflict-prevention strategy presented in the progress report is still pending approval by the General Assembly.

[1] The Framework Team has 21 members: the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Democracy Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization.

Recommendation 2: In consultation with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations system forums and partners, the Department of Political Affairs should seek clarification of its role and vision as the focal point for conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding, and how the regional divisions are to support that role.

The Department of Political Affairs acknowledged that clarification of its focal point role was necessary, but stated that that would be a time-consuming and sensitive process.

10. The Department has made significant progress in clarifying its role as the focal point for conflict prevention over the past three years. In his 2007 report, the Secretary-General stated the role he expects the Department to play, noting that "the Department of Political Affairs is the support structure and the operational arm for the good offices and preventive capabilities of the Secretary-General" (A/62/521 and Corr.1, para. 8).

11. OIOS also notes that more efforts are under way to further clarify the role of the Department of Political Affairs in relation to United Nations agencies. In his draft bulletin on the organization of the Department of Political Affairs, the Secretary-General defines the Department as the lead unit of the United Nations for political analysis, mediation and political guidance as they relate to the Organization's efforts towards preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding. The functions of the regional divisions with regard to conflict prevention are also clearly spelled out and include advising the Secretary-General in giving overall political direction to post-conflict peacebuilding efforts and to providing guidance to United Nations funds, programmes and agencies.

12. OIOS considers this recommendation implemented. OIOS notes that the Secretary-General's bulletin on the role of the Department of Political Affairs and the functions of its regional divisions in relation to other departments of the Secretariat and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes is still at the drafting stage, and trusts that its finalization will not be delayed.

Recommendation 3: The regional divisions should strengthen institutional mechanisms for inter-agency communications and for the design, promotion, mobilization and monitoring of system-wide support in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. These mechanisms should include: (a) an established protocol for inter-agency communications and information exchange on conflict-related reports and matters; (b) a well-defined concept for collaboration with the partner institutions and a needs assessment of each partnership (including regional commissions); and (c) where appropriate, guidelines for collaboration to clarify respective interests, roles and obligations of the collaborating institutions. With regard to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in order to strengthen complementarities and avoid duplication, a working group should be established to explore alternatives for formal institutional arrangements that would meet the needs of both departments.

The Department of Political Affairs commented that although it readily acknowledged the need to address the division of labour with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, it felt strongly that that could not be achieved through the format of a working group as proposed in the present report.

13. OIOS notes that while the recommended formal mechanisms have not been established fully, DPA has made some significant progress in strengthening its institutional mechanisms for inter-agency communications. Through the Framework Team Expert Reference Group, the Department closely collaborates with the regional bureaux of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to develop country-specific conflict-prevention strategies. As part of this collaboration, the Department developed, jointly with the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, a programme on building national capacities for conflict prevention.

14. The Department of Political Affairs has also increased its collaboration with other United Nations agencies in the field through the policy of integrated missions in conflict and post-conflict situations where the United Nations has a country team. Guidelines for an integrated mission planning process were issued and endorsed by the Secretary-General in June 2006, following which a working group was established to operationalize them. The working group has developed two papers: (a) the United Nations strategic assessment (draft, 2009), outlining the process for conducting interdepartmental and inter-agency strategic assessments of a political crisis, conflict or post-conflict situation; and (b) integrated planning for United Nations field presences (draft, 2009), focusing on joint mechanisms and planning processes needed at United Nations Headquarters for the planning of field missions that operate alongside a country team. The Department of Political Affairs is leading the first process, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations the second. Both drafts are expected to be approved by the second quarter of 2009.

15. OIOS notes, however, that there have been no specific concepts or guidelines established for the collaboration of the Department of Political Affairs with partner institutions outside the United Nations system.

16. OIOS considers this recommendation in progress. In order for OIOS to consider the recommendation implemented, the Department should conduct a needs assessment of its partnerships and establish a well-defined concept for collaboration with its partners outside the United Nations system.

Recommendation 4: The regional divisions should seek to implement fully all the agreed-upon modalities for cooperation with the regional organizations.

17. The 13 modalities for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the field of conflict prevention were adopted at the third high-level meeting between the Secretary-General and heads of regional and other intergovernmental organizations, held in New York on 28 and 29 July 1998 (see table 1).

18. OIOS takes note of specific issues raised by staff of the Department of Political Affairs concerning the implementation of the modalities. While in this review OIOS is considering only the activities of the Department's regional divisions in cooperation with regional organizations, it recognizes that the modalities were developed in reference to the United Nations system as a whole.[2] OIOS also recognizes that regional organizations differ from each other in terms of

[2] This review addresses actions referred to in the modalities to be taken between the United Nations and regional organizations, not those to be taken among the regional organizations themselves.

their resources and capacity and therefore call for varying forms of cooperation with the United Nations.

19. While noting that 4 of the 13 modalities were considered already implemented at the time of the in-depth evaluation (E/AC.51/2006/4), OIOS finds that of the other 9 modalities, 6 have been implemented and 1 is in progress, and that no action has been taken on 2.

20. The Department of Political Affairs established a liaison office with the African Union as part of the 10-year capacity-building programme, and informal discussions with other regional organizations have been held to explore ways to establish similar arrangements.[3] OIOS therefore finds that modality 3 is in progress.

21. Department focal points for regional organizations regularly exchange and maintain names and contact details of their counterparts in the regional organizations, as called for in modality 4. OIOS also notes that the Department has undertaken training programmes with the United Nations System Staff College and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research involving regional organizations, and conducted several training sessions with the African Union in 2007 and 2008, with another planned for 2009. OIOS therefore considers modality 6 implemented. OIOS also considers modalities 8 and 9 implemented through the work of the Framework Team on common assessments of conflict situations and Department support of the communities of practice in conflict prevention. Further, as required by modality 10, the Department maintains an online database of peace agreements and experiences in peacemaking (www.un.org/peacemaker). OIOS also notes that the Department has established the post of Resource Mobilization Specialist, in fulfilment of modality 12. As modalities 1, 2, 5 and 7 were deemed implemented at the time of the in-depth evaluation, the total number of implemented modalities now stands at 10.

22. The Department of Political Affairs did not provide relevant information on modalities 11 and 13, and OIOS therefore concludes that no action was taken on them. OIOS commends the Department's strong cooperation with the African Union and the European Union, in particular with regard to modalities 3, 5, 6 and 8, but notes that progress should be extended to other regional organizations. OIOS also notes that several regional organizations that responded to the OIOS survey expressed dissatisfaction with the level of the Department's implementation of the modalities, which they rated as "fair", "poor" or "very poor".[4] In particular, visits by Department staff and senior officials, the joint training of staff, the use of a conflict-prevention database and the Department's links with civil society were rated poorly. Respondents also said that the Department does not have a cooperation strategy with regional organizations, that it is unresponsive to their proposals for interaction and that cooperation takes place on an ad hoc basis. The full list of the 13 modalities and their current status of implementation is shown in table 1.

[3] See, for example, the declaration entitled "Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation: Framework for the 10-Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union" (A/61/630, annex).

[4] OIOS sent the survey to 18 regional organizations and received responses from 5, representing a 28 per cent response rate. While that rate is statistically not significant and was therefore not used as a basis for analysis, the responses were nonetheless taken into account.

Table 1
The 13 modalities for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations

Modality	*Status of implementation*
Modality 1: Better coordination and consultation among regional organizations, and between regional organizations and the United Nations, both at the headquarters level and in the field	Implemented by the time of in-depth evaluation
Modality 2: Better flows of information through systematic mechanisms among regional organizations, and between regional organizations and the United Nations	Implemented by the time of in-depth evaluation
Modality 3: Exchange of liaison officers among regional organizations, and between regional organizations and the United Nations	In progress
Modality 4: Exchange of lists of staff officers by country/region and functional areas	Implemented
Modality 5: Visits of staff at working level between the different headquarters	Implemented by the time of in-depth evaluation
Modality 6: Joint training of staff in the field of early warning and preventive action[a]	Implemented
Modality 7: Arranging joint expert meetings on certain specific areas of early warning and prevention	Implemented by the time of in-depth evaluation
Modality 8: Establish repositories of best practices and lessons learned in the area of early warning and prevention	Implemented
Modality 9: Development of common indicators for early warning	Implemented
Modality 10: Establishment of a database of the conflict-prevention capabilities of the United Nations and regional organizations	Implemented
Modality 11: Build specific links to civil society (including the media and professional groups) to increase awareness of the value of prevention	No action taken
Modality 12: Mobilize effective resources for early warning and preventive activities	Implemented

Modality	*Status of implementation*
Modality 13: Undertake follow-up meetings at the working level to develop the above and other specific modalities for early warning/prevention, on a case-by-case basis. The first such meetings could be convened by the United Nations before the end of the year (2006)	No action taken

[a] OIOS recognizes that the emphasis on early warning in modalities 6, 7, 8, 9, 12 and 13 is a result of the fact that the modalities were being developed in 1998 when the Department of Political Affairs was initiating an extensive training programme on early warning and preventive measures with the United Nations System Staff College. The programme ran from 1998 until 2006, and more than 1,600 United Nations staff members were trained.

23. OIOS considers this recommendation in progress. In order for OIOS to consider this recommendation implemented, the Department of Political Affairs should demonstrate that the remaining three modalities have been implemented.

Recommendation 5: The regional divisions should undergo an intensive, time-bound and results-oriented change management process. This should include reviews of management, organization structure, human resources and work processes and, if necessary, reprofiling of the competency needs of the divisions to better meet their mandates. The review of organization structure should consider the restructuring of the two mega-divisions — the Asia and the Pacific Division and the Americas and Europe Division — to better support substantive and management prerogatives. The work of the Policy Planning Unit should be reviewed with the goal of more closely linking it to the priorities and needs of the regional divisions. All the reviews should consider gender issues as well. The process should be driven by mandate, be facilitated by external experts in change management, have a dedicated internal change management capacity, and be required to propose restructured, renewed and adequately resourced regional divisions.

24. In its resolution 63/261, the General Assembly approved the restructuring of the two mega-divisions of Asia and the Pacific and the Americas and Europe, as set out in the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/521 and Corr.1). The Asia and the Pacific Division was separated into (a) the Middle East and West Asia Division and (b) the Asia and Pacific Division. Within the Asia and Pacific Division, two sections were created: Pacific I (Central, South and North-east Asia) and Pacific II (South-east Asia and Pacific). The Americas and Europe Division was separated into (a) the Americas and (b) Europe. It was decided to divide the Americas Division into the following sections: North America, Central America, the Caribbean and South America. The OIOS proposal to restructure the two divisions was thus implemented. The Department's proposal to reorganize its Policy Planning Unit and Mediation Support Unit into a combined policy, partnerships and mediation support division, however, was not approved by the General Assembly, which instead approved seven additional posts for the Mediation Support Unit.

25. In the proposed budget for the biennium 2008-2009, the Department proposed the establishment of a small change-management office. The proposal was rejected by the Controller, although OIOS notes that the function has now been included

under the Office of the Under-Secretary-General. OIOS also notes that the Department is currently developing a human resources strategy and produced a human resources action plan for the sixth cycle (2009) in line with the senior management compacts with the Secretary-General. The Department also conducted a gap-analysis exercise in January 2009 to assess its current skills set within its sections and regional divisions. In addition, it carried out a supply analysis, indicating workforce profile, including the distribution of staff by occupational group, category, geographical representation and gender. On the basis of those two analyses, the Department will make projections of staff movements due to retirement and other factors to inform its human resources strategy. OIOS concurs with that structured approach to developing a human resources strategy.

26. Although more could have been done in the change management process, OIOS recognizes the initiatives made by the Department and considers this recommendation implemented.

Recommendation 6: An independent, external evaluation should be conducted of both the Trust Fund for Preventive Action and the Trust Fund for Special Political Missions and Other Activities, to assess their effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and impact, as well as their management and operations.

27. The Department of Political Affairs has not conducted an independent, external evaluation of the Trust Fund for Preventive Action and the Trust Fund for Special Political Missions and Other Activities. OIOS notes, however, that the Department has developed a template for project reporting so that all trust fund reporting can be done in a standard format, and that annual substantive reports are required for all trust funds. The Department also plans to develop a database for the administration of its trust funds. OIOS considers these to be useful monitoring tools that should provide credible information for evaluation, but they cannot be a substitute for an independent external evaluation. Department staff have indicated to OIOS that, although they would like to carry out such an evaluation, they still lack the necessary resources to do so.

28. OIOS considers this recommendation in progress. While noting that the two Trust Funds continue to be in existence, and have been further replenished with up to $25 million, in order for OIOS to consider this recommendation implemented, the Department should conduct an independent external evaluation of the Trust Funds.

Recommendation 7: A protocol for information collection and a framework for conflict analysis should be established, in consultation with end-users and experts in the field, as well as with regional organizations to ensure relevance to local and regional concerns. The resulting protocol and framework for analysis should be made part of an orientation toolkit for desk officers, made available on the Intranet, and they should also be periodically reviewed and improved.

29. OIOS notes that a template framework for political analysis was developed in 2006. The template was developed through a consultative process involving staff of the regional divisions, field officers and members of the Framework Team. OIOS notes in particular the role of the Framework Team in providing a link between the Department and other United Nations agencies, as well as with staff in the field.

OIOS reviewed the template and notes that it provides guidance in three broad areas: (a) strategic analysis to provide policy alternatives in conflict or potential conflicts; (b) political analysis of situations in which armed conflict is neither prevalent nor likely; and (c) assessment of electoral processes. Some Department desk officers mentioned that the template provided a useful tool, further noting that its utility should not, however, be regarded in isolation of the formal and informal networks that exist between Headquarters and field staff.

30. Since 2007, the framework for political analysis has been distributed to all political staff of the Department and is included in the manual for new staff. It will be posted on the pilot Intranet website of the Department when it is launched in June 2009. Section B of the induction manual, "Carrying out your responsibilities", includes guidelines on (a) drafting, (b) how to access a template, (c) the framework for political analysis and (d) work during the general debate of the General Assembly. The Department is currently planning to undertake induction training for new staff members every six months.

31. OIOS considers this recommendation implemented.

Recommendation 8: The regional divisions should develop a knowledge management strategy for developing, organizing, storing, sharing and using their knowledge assets. In addition, the Department of Political Affairs should establish an evaluation policy to support institutional knowledge and best practices development.

32. The Policy Planning Unit intends to undertake a needs assessment survey on knowledge management in the second quarter of 2009. OIOS reviewed the draft survey questionnaire, which will be administered online to all Department staff, and noted that its objectives are (a) to assess the need for the development, dissemination and use of knowledge management tools; (b) to assess the specific needs of different groups (e.g., Headquarters, field, special political missions, electoral assistance); and (c) to test initial assumptions in the process of planning for those tools.

33. OIOS also reviewed the 2009-2010 business plan of the Mediation Support Unit and notes that one of the five goals is "mediation approaches and knowledge developed, captured, maintained and disseminated". The plan articulates that goal as consolidating the institutional knowledge and memory of the United Nations on mediation and its support activities in a manner that will enable the Organization to respond effectively and consistently on the basis of lessons learned and best practices. In line with that goal, OIOS notes that the Department has undertaken an After Action Review on Department support to the African Union mediation effort in Kenya. In addition, it has established a standby team of mediation experts, which has been in operation since March 2008 and focuses on delivering expert technical advice to United Nations peacekeeping and preventive diplomacy efforts, as well as playing a strategic role in developing policies, guidelines, procedures, standards and materials for training and lessons learned.

34. The Mediation Support Unit has also developed a programme concept on debriefing and lessons learned assignment for senior officials with the objective of enabling the Department to benefit from the experience of senior officials and to project lessons learned on a systematic basis.

35. In October 2006, the Mediation Support Unit also launched the Peacemaker website (www.un.org/peacemaker), an online mediation support tool for international peacemaking professionals, which contains a databank of all modern peace agreements. The website is intended to meet the information and knowledge requirements of peacemakers, with content including peace agreements, peace agreement summaries and selected literature on various substantive peacemaking issues, as well as an extensive legal library providing access to the legal framework that guides United Nations efforts in peacemaking and links to research centres and other useful resources. The site also offers access to peacemaking knowledge by providing lessons, case briefs, operational guidance notes, knowledge essays and comments on peace agreements and the management of peace processes. OIOS also notes the close collaboration between the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It also notes, in particular, that the department is developing a field mission Intranet in coordination with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which will be based on the current Intranet site of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.[5] Staff of the Department of Political Affairs participated in a peacekeeping Intranet and portal planning workshop held by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in Brindisi, Italy, from 28 to 30 October 2008, following which the Department of Political Affairs has been working with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to customize its current Intranet for Department missions.

36. OIOS also notes that the Department of Political Affairs has developed an evaluation and monitoring policy. The draft policy was approved by Department management in February 2009. The policy makes specific reference to recommendation 5 of a 2007 OIOS report,[6] which mandates the Department to develop an explicit policy statement on evaluation. OIOS reviewed the evaluation and monitoring policy, and is satisfied that it sufficiently addresses the part of its recommendation on establishing an evaluation policy.

37. OIOS considers this recommendation in progress. In order for OIOS to consider the recommendation implemented, the Department should demonstrate that it has a knowledge management strategy. OIOS recommends that the Department consider the knowledge management strategy of the new working group on knowledge management once it has been finalized and subsequently work with the group, under the leadership of the Office of Information and Communications Technology, in developing a strategy for the Department. *The Department noted that it has a representative from the Office of the Under-Secretary-General on the task force with a view to ensuring minimal overlap and duplication between Department and Secretariat-wide efforts.*

[5] http://intranet.dpko.un.org/dpko/pages/home.aspx.

[6] "Assessment of evaluation capacities and needs in the United Nations Secretariat", OIOS report No. IED-2006-006 (24 August 2007).

Recommendation 9: The regional divisions should establish division-level gender mainstreaming goals and action plans; these should be in support of the Department-level gender mainstreaming action plan and have direct links to management and individual performance plans (e-PAS). The regional divisions should also designate gender focal points for each division, to support the work of the Department's gender focal point.

38. The Department set out its strategic goals for gender mainstreaming in its 2006 policy statement on gender equality. OIOS notes that the Department's strategic-level goals provide for the appointment of gender advisers and focal points at Department headquarters as well as in all its field missions. OIOS further notes that, while the strategic goals on gender mainstreaming contain an all-inclusive statement that staff must ensure that gender dimensions are fully taken into account and reflected in all areas of work, there are no specific division-level goals to show how the regional divisions translate and implement that goal. One staff member observed that while the Department-level gender policy is very clear, it remains for regional divisions to include gender dimensions in their own divisional workplans.

39. Overall, there has been an increase in efforts to mainstream gender in the Department. Three gender mainstreaming workshops were conducted at Department headquarters in June and July 2008. The Department informed OIOS that in April 2008, it had conducted three workshops, at the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations Office for West Africa, on how to integrate Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) into conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding. The workshops were attended by representatives of regional and non-governmental organizations and staff of the respective United Nations country teams.

40. The Department action plan on implementing resolution 1325 (2000) calls on all regional divisions to include the priorities identified in the resolution in the workplans of each division and to appoint a full-time gender adviser for the Department and a network of focal points across divisions. Only two regional divisions — Europe and Africa II — demonstrated that resolution 1325 (2000) had been incorporated into their workplans. OIOS was informed that all regional divisions had a gender focal point, but — after repeated requests — the Department provided the names of focal points for only three of the regional divisions: Asia and the Pacific, Africa I and Africa II.

41. OIOS considers this recommendation in progress. In order for OIOS to consider this recommendation implemented, the regional divisions should develop divisional-level gender-mainstreaming goals in their workplans. Regional divisions should also demonstrate that they have established divisional gender focal points.

Recommendation 10: The regional divisions should strengthen their results-based management system. A clear relationship should be established between the e-PAS, the division management plans and the subprogramme logical framework. In consultation with their primary "clients", the divisions should further refine and develop performance indicators that are meaningful for internal management purposes.

42. OIOS reviewed the Department's biennial programme plan for the period 2006-2007 and that for 2008-2009.[7] OIOS noted that the indicator of achievement for 2006-2007, increased percentage of conflict situations addressed through peaceful means, was the same as that used in the medium-term plan for the period 2004-2005.[8] The Department had difficulty in providing precise numbers of conflict situations addressed. The indicator was changed in the programme plan for the period 2008-2009 to read: "100 per cent response to all requests of Member States and regional organizations for preventive action". For 2010-2011, a further indicator was added: "Number of good offices efforts to address conflict situations where the United Nations was asked to assist".[9]

43. In 2009, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs signed a senior manager's compact with the Secretary-General, which articulates specific performance measures. The compact offers a solid basis for regional divisions to establish clear linkages between the subprogramme logical framework, the divisional management plan and individual performance plans. However, only three regional divisions — Europe, the Americas and Africa II — provided evidence of a workplan to OIOS, and of those, only the Europe and Africa II divisions had linked their objectives to the compact and to individual work assessments. OIOS believes that there is scope for regional divisions to strengthen their results-based management system by developing divisional management plans that capture the broader Department-level goals in the compact, while also providing guidance and a basis for individual performance assessment.

44. OIOS considers this recommendation in progress. In order for OIOS to consider the recommendation implemented, regional divisions should develop divisional management plans that have an upward link with the compact signed by the Under-Secretary-General and a downward link with individual workplans.

Table 2
Summary of recommendations

Recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination	*Status of implementation*	*Necessary actions for implementation*
Recommendation 1: Develop and propose a system-wide strategy to address intra-State and transnational conflicts	Implemented	

[7] A/59/6/Rev.1 and Corr.1, programme 2, subprogramme 1, and A/61/6/Rev.1, programme 2, subprogramme 1.

[8] A/57/6/Rev.1, programme 1, subprogramme 1.

[9] A/63/6/Rev.1, programme 2, subprogramme 1.

Recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination	*Status of implementation*	*Necessary actions for implementation*
Recommendation 2: Clarify role and vision of the Department of Political Affairs as the focal point for conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding	Implemented	
Recommendation 3: Strengthen institutional mechanisms for inter-agency communications and for the design, mobilization and monitoring of system-wide support in conflict prevention and peacebuilding	In progress	• Conduct a needs assessment of Department of Political Affairs partnerships • Establish a well-defined concept for collaboration with partners outside the United Nations system
Recommendation 4: Implement fully all agreed-upon modalities for cooperation with the regional organizations.	In progress	• Demonstrate that the remaining 3 of the 13 modalities have been implemented
Recommendation 5: Undergo an intensive, time-bound and results-oriented change-management process	Implemented	
Recommendation 6: Conduct an independent, external evaluation of the Trust Fund for Preventative Action and the Trust Fund for Special Political Missions and Other Activities	In progress	• Conduct an independent external evaluation of the Trust Funds
Recommendation 7: Establish a protocol for information collection and a framework for conflict analysis	Implemented	
Recommendation 8: Develop a knowledge management strategy for developing, organizing, storing, sharing and using knowledge assets; and establish an evaluation policy to support institutional knowledge and best practices development	In progress	• Demonstrate that the Department has a knowledge management strategy • Consider the knowledge management strategy of the new working group on knowledge management once it has been finalized, and subsequently work with that group, under the leadership of the Office of Information and Communications Technology, in developing a strategy for the Department
Recommendation 9: Establish division-level gender-mainstreaming goals and action plans	In progress	• Develop division-level gender-mainstreaming goals • Demonstrate that the regional divisions have established divisional gender focal points

Recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination	*Status of implementation*	*Necessary actions for implementation*
Recommendation 10: Strengthen the regional divisions' results-based management system	In progress	• Develop divisional management plans that have an upward link with the compact signed by the Under-Secretary-General and a downward link with individual workplans

III. Conclusion

45. Although still to be endorsed by the General Assembly, the conflict-prevention strategy outlined in the progress report of the Secretary-General (A/60/891) marks a significant milestone towards developing a clear role and vision for the Department of Political Affairs. Furthermore, the Department's recent initiative to establish a United Nations-wide mediation focal point system and its activities in the context of the Framework Team, as well as its efforts to strengthen collaboration with other United Nations agencies in the field, also demonstrate increased clarity on the part of the Department regarding its role as focal point for mediation and conflict prevention within the United Nations system. However, there is a need for the Department to further strengthen its collaboration with partners outside the United Nations system, in particular civil society organizations.

(*Signed*) Inga-Britt **Ahlenius**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services

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Programme questions: evaluation

Triennial review of the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-sixth session on the thematic evaluation of knowledge management networks in the pursuit of the goals of the Millennium Declaration

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) is submitted in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its twenty-second session to review the implementation of its recommendations three years after taking decisions on evaluations submitted to the Committee. This triennial review determines whether or not recommendations from the thematic evaluation of knowledge management networks in the pursuit of the goals of the Millennium Declaration have been implemented. While the Committee directly endorsed three of the six evaluation recommendations, it referred to the other three in its endorsement. It additionally made two recommendations of its own.

OIOS concludes that one of the six original OIOS recommendations and both of the recommendations made by the Committee have been implemented. Neither a United Nations system-wide nor a Secretariat-wide knowledge management strategy has yet been developed. In December 2008, however, the General Assembly

* E/AC.51/2009/1.

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approved the information and communications technology strategy for the United Nations Secretariat and the establishment of the Office of Information and Communications Technology. The information and communications technology strategy comprehensively addresses knowledge management issues and the Office of Information and Communications Technology has within it a Knowledge Management Service that, in the opinion of OIOS, is sufficiently structured to act as the dedicated unit for knowledge management in the Secretariat. Furthermore, a new Working Group on Knowledge Management was established in June 2008 and that Group plans to develop a Secretariat knowledge management strategy by end of the second quarter of 2009. OIOS notes that this new Working Group has expanded its membership to include 13 Secretariat entities. A WikiSeek Task Force was also established, which has already undertaken a feasibility study of a pilot project called wikiSeek to assess ways in which wikis can be used to enhance availability of knowledge on operations and work processes. A wiki is a web page that allows anyone who accesses it to contribute to or edit its content.

OIOS did not note any initiatives to integrate knowledge management into the performance appraisal system of the Secretariat. It also did not note any deliberate and planned approach to training on knowledge management, although it does acknowledge various staff development initiatives in knowledge management concepts, mechanisms and tools. These include personal knowledge management training in the use of information products and tools given by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in 2006 and 2007.

Stressing that knowledge management is more than just technology, OIOS further encourages the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the Office of Information and Communications Technology to continue their important work in creating a culture and work environment that genuinely promotes and facilitates knowledge management in the United Nations.

I. Introduction

1. At its forty-sixth session, in 2006, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the thematic evaluation of knowledge management networks in pursuit of the goals of the Millennium Declaration (E/AC.51/2006/2).[1] That report contained six recommendations. While the Committee directly endorsed three of those six recommendations, it referred to the other three recommendations in its endorsement (see A/61/16 and Corr.1, para. 377). The Committee additionally made two recommendations of its own.

2. The present report is a triennial review of those recommendations and examines if and how the recommendations have been implemented. OIOS will report on each recommendation individually within the framework of the endorsement made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

3. The present triennial review is based on the following four methods: (a) a review and analysis of biennial progress reports on the status of recommendations that are monitored through the OIOS issue track database; (b) an analysis of relevant information, documents and reports obtained from the United Nations entities that implemented the recommendations; (c) interviews with programme managers and staff involved in implementing the recommendations; and (d) interviews with other key sources to verify and validate the status of implementation. A draft of the report was made available to the respective offices and departments for review and the present report incorporates their comments.

II. Findings

4. Overall, OIOS finds that one of the original six OIOS recommendations and both of the two recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination have been implemented. Five of the OIOS recommendations are in progress.

Committee for Programme and Coordination recommendation 1

Recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, as Chairman of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), to encourage the Board's newly established Task Force on Knowledge Sharing to fully consider the recommendation contained in paragraph 72 of the report.

OIOS recommendation 1 (para. 72 of the OIOS report)

The CEB, when developing a United Nations system-wide knowledge management strategy, should specifically address the following issues (in addition to those already spelled out in the terms of reference for its Task Force on Knowledge Sharing):

(a) A common understanding of what knowledge sharing entails and why it is important;

[1] OIOS defines knowledge management as the systematic creation, organization, storage and sharing of knowledge in order to better achieve organizational goals (E/AC.51/2006/2, para. 2).

(b) A clear taxonomy for different types of knowledge networks and the role played by each type of network, encouraging movement where possible to more strategic, focused and cross-cutting organizational networks;

(c) A shift in focus from knowledge sharing as primarily broadcasting information to a combination of information, collaboration and peer interactions;

(d) A strategy for integrating knowledge sharing more fully into work processes. To the extent possible, the strategy should use the results of the pilot knowledge-sharing project discussed in recommendation 4 below.

5. While an overarching system-wide strategy for knowledge sharing has not yet been developed, OIOS was informed by the CEB secretariat that the "central thrust" of the recommendation had been implemented in several ways.[2] The secretariat primarily referred to the Board's work in facilitating various communities of knowledge and practice, as well as its work in promoting common system-wide work tools for climate change and employment. One example given was to a website entitled "Gateway to the UN system's work on climate change", maintained by the Department of Public Information on behalf of the United Nations Communications Group Task Force on Climate Change.[3] A further example was the Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work, which was developed in 2006 to help organizations and other development partners to work more effectively together to promote more and better jobs. OIOS reviewed both of these initiatives and notes that they are good forums for sharing documented information and promoting common approaches, especially when utilized in tandem with the exchange of experience that takes place within the coordinating bodies and other bilateral discussions. By themselves, however, they do not facilitate sharing of undocumented ideas and expertise, which are important components of knowledge management.

6. In a 2007 report on knowledge management (JIU/REP/2007/6; see A/63/140), the Joint Inspection Unit similarly recommended that CEB should develop a common system-wide definition of knowledge management, and a minimum set of guidelines to be used in the development of knowledge management strategies by each United Nations entity. In their consolidated response to that report, organizations noted that CEB lacked the capacity and resources to effectively produce these outputs and should focus instead on its role in the coordination of the knowledge management activities carried out by individual entities (A/63/140/Add.1, para. 4).

7. The CEB Task Force on Knowledge Sharing held several preliminary meetings on this topic in 2005 and 2006 and also developed terms of reference. However, OIOS did not note any recent activity of the Task Force and therefore concludes that it is currently inactive.

8. OIOS considers this recommendation to be in progress. OIOS notes the capacity constraints referred to in paragraph 6 above. However, OIOS believes that CEB plays an important system-wide coordination role for knowledge management. In order for OIOS to consider this recommendation to have been implemented, CEB

[2] Response from the Chief Executives Board secretariat to OIOS, dated 13 February 2009.

[3] http://www.un.org/climatechange.

must demonstrate that it is integrating the various knowledge management initiatives being undertaken in the United Nations and bringing greater coherence and complementarity to knowledge management in the Organization.

Committee for Programme and Coordination recommendation 2

Recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretariat Task Force, under the leadership of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, which has the appropriate expertise, to continue to develop a Secretariat knowledge-sharing agenda, taking into account the recommendations contained in paragraphs 73, 74, 76 and 77 of the report and the knowledge-sharing initiatives being pursued by other United Nations entities, including the CEB Task Force on Knowledge Sharing, the Working Group on Knowledge Management of the United Nations Development Group, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund.

OIOS recommendation 2 (para. 73 of the OIOS report)

The Secretariat Task Force on Knowledge Sharing should develop a Secretariat-wide knowledge strategy, in conjunction with the system-wide strategy being developed by the CEB and concurrently with the reform process and organizational change initiatives. The strategy should in particular promote the role of knowledge networks in strengthening knowledge sharing within the Secretariat and with external partners, developing a model and methodology for how those networks can best work. In doing that, the Task Force may want to look at the knowledge-sharing model being piloted by the United Nations Development Group Knowledge Management Working Group. OIOS notes that the reporting lines for the Task Force will be decided in the course of the ongoing reform resulting from the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations reform (A/60/692 and Corr.1). OIOS trusts that a decision on reporting lines will not be delayed.

9. Following the restructuring of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the establishment of the Office of Information and Communications Technology in 2008, there is no longer a Secretariat Task Force on Knowledge Sharing being led by the Library. In its place, a new body, the Working Group on Knowledge Management, has been established to champion the development and implementation of a knowledge management strategy for the Secretariat, in cooperation with the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies. OIOS reviewed the terms of reference and notes that the Working Group is chaired by a representative of the Office of Information and Communications Technology, with membership from 13 different Secretariat entities.[4] The Working Group, which first met in June 2008, is mandated to work in cooperation with the CEB Task Force on Knowledge Management, as well as other knowledge management entities, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/235, and is tasked with

[4] The membership of the Working Group on Knowledge Management is Chief Information Technology Officer (Chair), Information Technology Services Division, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Management, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Political Affairs, Department of Public Information, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Office of Central Support Services, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Office at Geneva and United Nations Office at Vienna.

developing a knowledge management plan for the United Nations, and identifying the concrete steps and activities required to implement the plan.

10. OIOS notes that, according to its workplan, the Working Group on Knowledge Management has established a monthly meeting schedule and aims to have developed a draft Secretariat knowledge management strategy by the second quarter of 2009. In its meeting in January 2009, as part of its preparations for developing the strategy, the Working Group was given a presentation on "Knowledge management strategy, Intranet and collaborative tools" by the Open Society Institute, a private foundation based in New York. The workplan also highlights the importance of designating information management specialists in Secretariat departments as focal points on knowledge management in order to address the key issue of managing the Organization's knowledge. OIOS concurs with this approach.

11. Furthermore, a Secretariat Information and Communications Technology strategy was approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 63/262 in December 2008, simultaneously with approval of the establishment of the Office of Information and Communications Technology.[5] OIOS reviewed the strategy and notes that it identifies knowledge management and collaboration as one of its key institutional drivers and defines knowledge management as encompassing three essential processes that are intricately linked: organizational learning, information management and information technology. The strategy will be carried out through a set of strategic programme areas, including the knowledge management programme, whose goal is to provide an effective and collaborative environment for United Nations personnel and stakeholders "to capture, share and own substantive knowledge relevant to their expertise" (A/62/793 and Corr.1, para. 54). The programme plans to provide the enabling policies, work processes, standards and technological tools for knowledge management activities so that processes, best practices and lessons learned can be more uniformly maintained and accessed. OIOS commends these initiatives as important steps to creating a knowledge culture in the Organization.

12. In addition to these more recent developments, over the past three years, under the leadership of the Department of Public Information, the Secretariat has embarked on a drive for improved knowledge sharing through the use of a common Intranet portal, iSeek. All Secretariat duty stations now use iSeek as their default Intranet, and it is globally accessible to travelling Secretariat staff members and to more than 100 new sites around the world. Presently, there are ongoing initiatives to extend access to relevant and appropriate iSeek content to United Nations funds and programmes and to Member States. A Member States portal, deleGATE, was established and has been available since September 2008.[6] Dubbed "iSeek for Member States", deleGATE is updated daily and includes links to essential information resources and delegate-specific tools.

13. OIOS considers implementation of this recommendation to be in progress. OIOS notes that the responsibility for full implementation of this recommendation

[5] The Office of Information and Communications Technology headed by the Chief Information Technology Officer, receives guidance from the Executive Committee on Information and Communications Technology, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, with membership of senior managers at the under-secretary-general level.

[6] http://iseek.un.org/webpgdept1496_45.asp.

now rests with the new Working Group Knowledge Management under the leadership of the Office of Information and Communications Technology.

OIOS recommendation 3 (para. 74 of the OIOS report)

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as a major author of Secretariat reports in the economic and social areas and convenor of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, should conduct a pilot project on further integrating knowledge sharing in the report production process, with a view to determining the utility, costs, limitations and results of more effective knowledge sharing. The Department should review the current production process for one or more specific reports and identify key points where broader knowledge sharing could occur. The pilot project should result in developing a methodology for further integrating knowledge sharing into daily work processes in order to improve the quality and production speed of reports. The Department should consult with the CEB and Secretariat Task Forces on Knowledge Sharing in implementing the project.

14. The Committee for Programme and Coordination did not directly endorse this recommendation, but instead requested that the Secretariat Task Force on Knowledge Sharing should consider such a pilot project in the development of a Secretariat knowledge-sharing agenda. OIOS therefore did not follow up with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on this specific recommendation.

15. The Working Group on Knowledge Management has embarked on several initiatives to address the integration of knowledge management into daily work processes. A WikiSeek Task Force was established to assess and develop ways by which wikis could be used to enhance availability of information on operations and processes by allowing staff members to contribute in their areas of expertise.[7] A wiki is a web page or collection of pages designed to enable anyone who accesses it to contribute to or modify its content. In this regard, a feasibility study has already been undertaken through a pilot project, called wikiSeek, to develop a central and live repository of institutional knowledge in the Protocol Office of the Secretariat and to record knowledge of how protocol activities and processes are carried out. OIOS notes that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is a member of the Working Group on Knowledge Management and acknowledges its report on the World Economic Situation and Prospects as an important contribution to knowledge management in report production.[8]

16. OIOS considers implementation of this recommendation to be in progress. In order for OIOS to consider this recommendation to have been implemented, the new Working Group on Knowledge Management in its strategy and workplan, must

[7] Dag Hammarskjöld Library, power point presentation: "Capturing, managing and sharing the United Nations institutional memory". The Task Force includes representatives from the Department of Management, the Department of Public Information and the Office of Information and Communications Technology.

[8] The World Economic Situation and Prospects is a joint report of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the five regional commissions, which provides an overview of recent global economic performance and short-term prospects for the world economy, and of some key global economic policy and development issues.

consider appropriate pilot projects for integrating knowledge management in report production processes or some other key Secretariat activity.

OIOS recommendation 5 (para. 76 of the OIOS report)

The Office of Human Resources Management should make knowledge sharing a more explicit and stronger component of the performance appraisal system. It should identify the most relevant knowledge management competencies discussed in the "United Nations profile of an effective manager" and incorporate them into performance appraisal systems for all staff. Knowledge sharing could be addressed more directly in human resource action plans, as well as in individual staff workplans and performance assessments.

17. The Committee for Programme and Coordination did not directly endorse this recommendation, but instead requested that the Secretariat Task Force on Knowledge Sharing consider the incorporation of knowledge management into the performance appraisal system in the development of a Secretariat knowledge-sharing agenda. OIOS therefore did not follow up with the Office of Human Resources Management on this specific recommendation.

18. OIOS did not identify any activities pursuant to making knowledge management a component of the performance appraisal system in the United Nations Secretariat, or any such reference in the terms of reference or the workplan of the Working Group on Knowledge Management. In addition, the Staff Management Coordinating Committee Working Group on Performance Management also does not have this item on its agenda, and while the Talent Management Working Group has a role for knowledge management in its framework, it does not currently have a specific focus on performance management. OIOS agrees with the observation of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, that a full definition of knowledge management is still to be accepted, and that knowledge management competency requirements for managers should be incorporated into an inventory of skills to be developed for all positions under the talent management project.

19. OIOS further notes that the Joint Inspection Unit, in its 2007 report on knowledge management, similarly recommended that the CEB should establish knowledge management competencies as one of the criteria to be assessed in the staff performance appraisal system. In its management response, CEB welcomed the recommendation as a critical component for the success of any knowledge management strategy and stressed that this might require incentives and opportunities for capacity-building of the required competencies along with an environment that is conducive to knowledge management (A/63/140/Add.1, para. 9). CEB called for a more broad-based approach that would more fully address the obstacles that were identified in the OIOS report, such as cultural limitations, and the lack of leadership support and incentives that encourage knowledge management (Ibid.).

20. OIOS considers that no action has been taken on this recommendation. OIOS recommends that the Working Group on Knowledge Management should include this issue in its workplan. In order for OIOS to consider this recommendation to have been implemented, the Working Group should define the methodology for incorporating knowledge management into the performance appraisal system as part of the Secretariat knowledge-management strategy.

OIOS recommendation 6 (para. 77 of the OIOS report)

The Office of Human Resources Management should address knowledge management more directly and explicitly as a topic in its staff development programme. That should include training in knowledge management concepts, mechanisms, tools and practices. A knowledge-sharing component should be specifically introduced into existing courses for leadership, management and organizational development, as well as into teamwork training programmes.

21. The Committee for Programme and Coordination did not directly endorse this recommendation, but instead requested that the Secretariat Task Force on Knowledge Sharing should consider incorporating knowledge management into the staff development programme when establishing a Secretariat knowledge management agenda. OIOS therefore did not follow up with the Office of Human Resources Management on this specific recommendation.

22. OIOS notes that there have been various staff development and training activities undertaken in the framework of the United Nations training and learning policy. The former Knowledge Sharing Section of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the Library's Knowledge Sharing Centre developed and continue to conduct a training programme for Secretariat staff on information handling techniques, called personal knowledge management. Personal knowledge management is defined as "managing and supporting personal knowledge and information so that it is accessible, meaningful and valuable to the individual".[9] Over 160 Secretariat staff took the training in 2006 and 200 took it in 2007.

23. One of the products offered under personal knowledge management training was the "knowledge pointer" series. Knowledge pointers are essentially designed as checklists for several information-related topics in addition to the one-on-one coaching sessions of the personal knowledge management package. Knowledge pointers help staff members to cope with the daily flood of information and to find relevant information more efficiently, and also provide guidelines on how to organize the information and share it with colleagues more effectively. Versions of the personal knowledge management programmes have been launched in Geneva and Santiago, and the knowledge pointers are being translated into Spanish. OIOS commends the Dag Hammarskjöld Library for this initiative, which is a positive step for staff development in knowledge management tools and techniques.

24. The United Nations System Staff College conducted a pilot leadership training course for senior staff members in November 2007. The course was attended by 47 participants, representing a cross section of the United Nations. A steering group was formed to review the assessments of the programme carried out by the Staff College, which recommended that it redesign the course to focus more on change management in the United Nations and specifically include elements of "learning and knowledge sharing". OIOS encourages such courses for senior staff as they are important for creating senior leadership awareness of and support for a knowledge management culture in the United Nations.

25. OIOS also notes that in July 2008 the Office of Information and Communications Technology, in conjunction with the Department of Public Information, held a forum on "Learning to manage with knowledge". Participants

[9] *Inside Knowledge*, 5 April 2004, vol. 7, No. 7.

included senior management and staff who are responsible for knowledge management initiatives in the United Nations system and renowned knowledge management experts.[10] The main objectives were to share practical lessons from within the United Nations system on existing knowledge management initiatives; to understand how knowledge management could help the United Nations and its specialized agencies to meet their mandates; and to identify concrete steps to implement successful knowledge management initiatives within the United Nations. Participants worked in small groups to define priority knowledge management initiatives for the United Nations and to provide input into an information and communications strategy to be submitted to senior management for endorsement.

26. OIOS reviewed the Office of Human Resources Management Staff Development Programme Handbook for 2008 and noted that, despite the positive initiatives noted in paras. 22 to 25 above, it did not include any specific courses or topics on knowledge management. OIOS also did not find any reference to knowledge management training in the terms of reference or workplan for the Working Group on Knowledge Management. OIOS understands, however, that the Office of Human Resources Management has plans to include a stronger component on collaboration, knowledge sharing and knowledge management tools in its leadership, management and organizational development activities. OIOS agrees that a more systematic, deliberate and planned approach to training on knowledge management would have greater impact than the ad hoc initiatives previously discussed.

27. OIOS considers implementation of this recommendation to be in progress. In order for OIOS to consider this recommendation to have been implemented, the Working Group on Knowledge Management must consider a more systematic approach to knowledge management training in the development of a Secretariat knowledge-management strategy.

Committee for Programme and Coordination recommendation 3

Recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to consider designating the Knowledge Sharing Section of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library as the lead Secretariat unit with responsibility for developing, encouraging, facilitating and guiding knowledge sharing in the Secretariat, taking into account the recommendation contained in paragraph 75 of the report.

OIOS recommendation 4 (para. 75 of the OIOS report)

The Secretary-General should designate a dedicated unit for knowledge sharing in the Secretariat. The overall role of the section should be to encourage, facilitate and guide knowledge sharing in the Secretariat and to ensure consistency, coordination and harmonization among Secretariat tools,

[10] Participants included staff from CEB, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Tourism Organization, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Population Fund and the World Bank. Keynote speakers included Professors Larry Prusak and Tom Davenport from Babson College in Massachusetts and Sharon Dawes from the State University of New York.

activities and mechanisms. The section should be provided with necessary resources for adequately fulfilling its new responsibilities. In collaboration with the Secretariat Task Force on Knowledge Sharing, as well as the Office of Human Resources Management and the Information Technology Services Division, the Section should be tasked with:

(a) Developing a common knowledge-sharing toolkit;

(b) Providing guidance and support to knowledge networks;

(c) Developing guidelines on knowledge sharing;

(d) Developing a strategy for systematically gathering and utilizing the knowledge of staff leaving the United Nations, using protocols that are more systematic and effective than current methods;

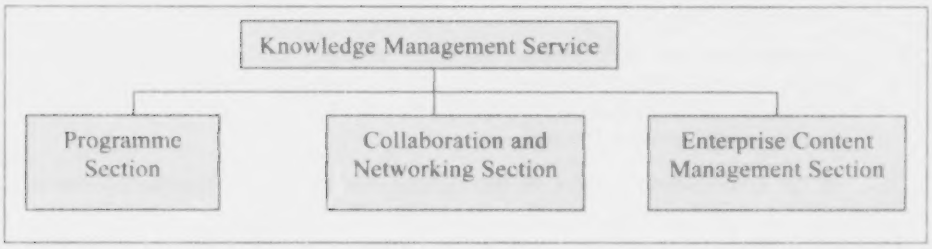
(e) Developing common tools and protocols for capturing and disseminating good practices and lessons learned;

(f) Creating and maintaining a Secretariat knowledge-sharing website with guidance, tools, good practices and tips.

OIOS notes that the location of the unit would be decided in the course of the ongoing reform resulting from the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations reform (A/60/692 and Corr.1). OIOS trusts that a decision on its location will not be delayed.

28. As discussed in paragraph 9, and as outlined in the Secretary-General's report on investing in information and communications technology (A/62/793 and Corr.1), the Secretariat knowledge management function is now placed in the Office of Information and Communications Technology. The General Assembly approved the information and communications technology strategy and governance structure of the Office in its resolution 63/263. OIOS notes that the new structure includes a Knowledge Management Service (see A/62/793/Add.1) comprised of three sections as illustrated below.[11]

Proposed structure of the Knowledge Management Service



[11] This structure has since been approved together with the transfer from the Department of Management of the Information Technology Services Division, as posted on iSeek on 7 January 2009.

29. OIOS was informed by staff of the Office of Information and Communications Technology that the specific functions of the Knowledge Management Service were to gather, store, share and disseminate knowledge. The Service will also be responsible for rethinking and streamlining information handling processes, improving information management policies, encouraging collaboration by using standard tools, and managing electronic repositories. As noted in paragraph 9 above, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library was restructured in 2008 and it no longer has a Knowledge Sharing Section. OIOS believes that the Knowledge Management Service in the Office of Information and Communications Technology represents a sufficient formal organizational structure and dedicated unit for knowledge management in the Secretariat. The Chief of this Service serves as the chairman of the Working Group on Knowledge Management.

30. OIOS considers this recommendation to have been implemented. OIOS notes, however, that the Secretary-General still needs formally to designate the Knowledge Management Service as the lead Secretariat office for knowledge management. It further cautions that placement of the Knowledge Management Service in the Office of Information and Communications Technology should not result in an overemphasis on technology at the expense of other equally important components of knowledge management, such as the sharing and use of ideas, expertise and experience.

Committee for Programme and Coordination recommendation 4

Recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to expand the membership of the Secretariat Task Force and to include additional substantive offices.

31. As noted in paragraph 9, the Secretariat Task Force on Knowledge Sharing led by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library no longer exists. The Working Group on Knowledge Management led by the Office of Information and Communications Technology that has replaced it has an expanded membership and includes more substantive offices.

32. OIOS considers this recommendation to have been implemented.

Committee for Programme and Coordination recommendation 5

Recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, through the Committee on Information, on the further development of the knowledge-sharing initiatives of the Secretariat.

33. At the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General presented his report on investing in information and communications technologies (A/62/793 and Corr.1). OIOS reviewed the report and notes that it sufficiently references further developments on knowledge-sharing initiatives in the Secretariat.

34. OIOS considers this recommendation to have been implemented.

III. Conclusion

35. Over the past three years, increased attention has been given to knowledge management in the context of United Nations reforms and organizational change. The establishment and approval by the General Assembly of the Office of Information and Communications Technology, with its dedicated Knowledge Management Service, as well as the Secretariat information and communications technology strategy, which incorporates knowledge-management components, mark important milestones towards enhancing knowledge management in the Secretariat.

36. However, OIOS stresses that knowledge management is not just about technology and, as such, it continues to emphasize the other necessary aspects of knowledge management as discussed in its 2006 evaluation, including senior leadership support, staff incentives and rewards, training, guidelines and tools. OIOS looks forward to the draft knowledge management strategy that will be produced by the end of the second quarter of 2009, and expects that this will be an important first step towards creating the mechanisms and tools that are needed for effective knowledge management. OIOS encourages CEB and the Office of Information and Communications Technology to continue their important work in building a culture and working environment that promotes and facilitates true knowledge management in the United Nations.

(*Signed*) Inga-Britt **Ahlenius**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services

25 March 2009